

Denmark Parish Records: 1573-Present

Class Handout: Beginner

1 September 2020

History of Events Leading Up to the Invention of Parish Records

- 965: King Harald Bluetooth converts Denmark to Christianity
- 1070: Adam of Bremen claims there are 700 churches in Denmark: 300 churches in Scania, 150 in Zealand, 150 in Jutland, and 100 in Fyn
- 1300: 1845 churches in Denmark, 92 in Scania, 371 in Zealand, 1187 in Jutland, 195 in Fyn
- 1400: Paper begins to be used in Denmark & records start being written in Danish
- 31 October 1536: Denmark breaks away from the Catholic church
- 1538: England starts keeping parish records
- 1545-1563: Council of Trent causes Catholic countries to start keeping parish records
- 1573: First church records begin in Hjorkær parish
- 1618-1648: Thirty Years War, sparks an interest, & causes a need
- 20 May 1645: Christian IV sent out a resolution requiring all priests in eastern Denmark to record the baptisms, marriages, and burials of their parishioners
- 1646: The same law was passed in western Denmark
- 1683: King Christian V's Civil Code tightened record keeping practices
- 13 January 1736: Confirmation law is passed
- 1812-1816: (usually 1814): Two copies of the parish records were now kept & all parishes begin using standard forms
- 1812-1875: Moving in and out records are included in the parish records
- 1828: Children's surnames are recorded
- 1892: All parishes begin using the same standard forms

Different Types of Information within Parish Records

Birth & Baptisms

- Early records give the name of the child, the date of baptism, whether legitimate or not, the name of father (& mother if illegitimate), the locality of residence, & the witnesses
- Early records may keep illegitimate or stillborn children separate from the other records
- After 1814 should also give the mother & the date of birth. The baptisms should also be segregated by sex

Confirmations

- After 1736, children ages 12-19 (usually 14-15) were tested on their knowledge of the catechism
- Early records may just give the child's name, the father's name, & residence
- After 1814 should also name the mother, give the date of birth or baptism, a statement concerning knowledge & behavior, & their vaccination date

Engagement & Marriages

- Early records give the name of the groom & bride, whether they are widows or bachelors, the sponsors, & the dates of engagement, & marriage
- Some parishes record the engagement & marriage in one record, some have separate registers
- Engagements generally have better information
- After 1814, ages, & the names of parents may also be included

Death & Burials

- Early records should name the deceased (and/or their father if they are a minor, or their husband if they are a wife or widow), the place of residence
- Age is often given, but not always
- After 1814 the name, date of death, and age should always be given

Moving In & Out

- 1814-1875 the priest had the responsibility to record those who moved in and out of the parish
- Each person's name, age, place of origin, & destination were recorded
- People sometimes fell through the cracks and were skipped
- After 1875, this responsibility was given to the parish bailiff (sognefoged) and they are no longer recorded in the parish records

Absolutions

- When someone broke a commandment, they had to stand in front of the congregation or the priest and confess their sin, most common is having an illegitimate child
- Sometimes there are only names, sometimes complete stories

Name Indexes (Almindeligt Jævnførelses Register)

- Begin in 1814 and end in 1892
- Meant to be an index to help the priests find other records concerning an individual. Only worked as well as the priest kept the record
- Not much genealogical value

Online Repositories

- FamilySearch: All of them, black & white
- Arkivalieronline: All of them, black & white, & color
- MyHeritage: 1576-1919, black & white
- Ancestry: 1812-1918, color
- DanishFamilySearch: many of them, black & white

How to browse images in FamilySearch

1. Go to www.familysearch.org
2. Click on "Search" and then click on "Catalog" in the resulting dropdown menu
3. In the place name search type, "Denmark, [name of the county that existed 1793-1970], [name of the parish]"
4. In the search results, click "Church Records"



If a camera icon appears next to your item of interest you can browse the images online. If a magnifying glass is present then at least some of the content has been indexed. If a microfilm image is present instead of a camera, then those images have not been published on FamilySearch's website

How to browse images in Arkivalieronline

Note: Arkivalieronline has no searchable database

1. Go to www.sa.dk
2. Click on "Kirkebøger"
3. If your ancestor lived anywhere in the current kingdom except northern Schleswig, click "Kirkebøger fra hele landet." If your ancestor lived in northern Schleswig, click "Kirkebøger, Sønderjylland." If your ancestor lived in Southern Schleswig or Holstein the records will be in Germany. If your ancestor lived in Skåne, Halland, or Blekinge the records will be in Sweden.
4. Two dropdown icons should now appear. You can use them as dropdowns or you can type in them. Insert the county name into the "Amt" column (this is optional) and insert the parish name into the "Arkiv" column (this is required)
5. This will bring up all the available church records for your parish of interest. Hovedministeralbøger are the priest's copies, Kontraministeralbøger are the clerk's. Images will be in grayscale unless the phrase "Ny Scanning i farver - indtil 1892" is included. In that case they will be in high definition and in color

How to search MyHeritage's database

1. Go to www.myheritage.com
2. Click on "Research" then click on "Collection Catalog" in the resulting dropdown menu
3. On the left side of the screen click "Birth, Marriage & Death," then click "Church Records," then click "Europe."
4. There should now be an option to click "Denmark Church Records, 1576-1919"

How to search Ancestry's database

1. Go to www.ancestry.com
2. Click on "Search" then click on "Card Catalog" in the resulting dropdown menu
3. Type "Denmark Church Records" in the search bar that says "Title"
4. Click on the database that says "Denmark, Church Records, 1812-1918 (in Danish)"

Here you have the option to browse the records or use the searchable database

How to search DanishFamilySearch

1. Go to www.danishfamilysearch.com
2. Click on "Search" then click "Search in Danish Sources" in the resulting dropdown menu

Research Strategies

Helpful Tips

- People generally marry mid-twenties to early thirties
- Look for children a few years before the marriage up until the mother reaches 42-50
- Look for place names and other clues to uniquely identify people of the same name
- The first 4 children are often named after the grandparents



- If a child dies young, the next child will often take their name
- Some families have 2+ children with the same name living at the same time

Strategy Cycle

1. Search for your ancestor's christening
2. Search for siblings
3. Search for the parent's marriage
4. Check to see if any siblings died young
5. Calculate the parent's years of birth from their burials
6. Loop back to step 1

Always use other records when possible. This strategy only works if the family stays in the same parish or a nearby one for several generations. Errors are most likely to occur when moving between generations (moving from step 5 back to step 1). Think of other sources as supplements not just substitutes.

Supplements to the Parish Records				
English Name	Danish Name	Presenter	Priority	Link to Class
Census (Kingdom)	Folketællinger	Anka Magee	High	https://www.familysearch.org/ask/learningViewer/933
Census (Schleswig)	Folketællinger i Sønderjylland	Charlotte Champenois	High	https://www.familysearch.org/ask/learningViewer/2058
Military Levying Rolls	Lægdsruller	Geoffrey Fröberg Morris	High	https://www.familysearch.org/ask/learningViewer/2096
Probate	Skifteprotokoller	Tanner Blair Tolman	High	https://www.familysearch.org/ask/learningViewer/2099
Land Deeds	Fæstebrev Fæsteprotokoller,	Tanner Blair Tolman	Medium	Coming September 19 th
Land Registration Lists	Jordebøger, Matrikler	Tanner Blair Tolman	Low	To be announced
Tax	Consumption, Familie, og Folkeskat & Ekstraskatteregnskaber	Tanner Blair Tolman	Low	https://www.familysearch.org/ask/learningViewer/2095
Vaccination	Vaccinationsprotokoller	Tanner Blair Tolman	Low	https://www.familysearch.org/ask/learningViewer/2097